



Statement by Mr. Abdulla Khashimov
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Republic of Uzbekistan
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Dear Mr. Davitashvili, Mr. Asakawa, dear participants of the conference,

Good afternoon, dear friends,

Let me express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Georgia, the leadership of the ADB, the departments of Central, West and East Asia, the Secretariat for the great work on the preparation of the conference, for the warm welcome and hospitality.

We have a tradition of welcoming the annual conference with concrete results. In this regard, I would like to note that in recent years, as a result of further strengthening of cooperation within the framework of CAREC, Uzbekistan's trade volume with neighbouring countries has increased almost 2.7 times.

The total share of the CAREC member countries in the republic's foreign trade turnover has reached 35%.

Thanks to the new investment policy of the country's Leadership and the further expansion of cooperation over the past 5 years, excluding the pandemic, the sustained GDP growth rate was more than 5.6%. It must be said that the share of direct investments and loans from international financial institutions in Uzbekistan's GDP over these years has had high growth rates. By 2030, it is expected to double GDP and volume of exports.

In this regard, I would like to thank ADB and other international partners for their systematic support in promoting economic reforms.

Let me briefly focus on the agenda.

The Uzbek side supports the initiative to achieve the region's resilience to climate change.

As you know, speaking at the meeting of the heads of Central Asian states in September this year, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed to establish a multilateral platform "Central Asian Climate Dialogue."

An international forum dedicated to the climate agenda will be held in Samarkand next year. The Forum will adopt a draft resolution of the UN General Assembly "Central Asia facing global climate challenges: consolidation for common prosperity", as well as a Strategy on the adaptation of the region to climate change.

We hope that the delegations of the CAREC member countries and international partners will actively participate and make a great contribution to the work of the forum.

The Uzbek side also supports the proposal to establish a donor fund for the implementation of development projects in CAREC. We believe that the fund should be managed by the ADB and funded by contributions from the international partners of the CAREC program.

We consider the issues of strengthening connectivity in the CAREC space to be relevant. Currently, Uzbekistan is implementing 7 projects for the construction of roads and electrification of railways, with the involvement of external loans in the amount of \$ 1.3 billion.

In this regard, we offer:

Firstly, to accelerate the launch of the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway; secondly, to increase the throughput capacity of the route Eastern ports of China -Kashgar-Osh-Bukhara-Ashgabat with access to Iran and Turkey; thirdly, to give a new impetus to the development of the Central Asia-Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor; Fourthly, we consider it important to increase the carrying capacity of land and sea transport along the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Caucasus-Europe corridor; finally, we propose to start the practical implementation of the ADB project to create the Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan economic corridor.

It is well known that the ideology and values of CAREC are being tested in the face of global shifts, sanctions pressure and other factors that have a significant impact on international trade. In these circumstances, all participants of the conference are united by one question - "How to further promote cooperation within the framework of CAREC."

In this regard, we propose to develop new conceptual approaches to improve the competitiveness and quality of cooperation.

It is necessary to concentrate efforts on issues of trade facilitation, the fullest use of the competitive advantages of mutual complementarity of the markets of the participating countries of the program.

It is necessary to develop a catch-up schedule in the field of digitalization of trade, transport, and the entire range of international services. In general, we need a new look, large-scale acceleration approaches focused on 2040.

The Georgian proverb reads "Tkven moigebt - Tkven moigebt qvelapers", which means: To gain time means to win everything. Thus, CAREC should serve to fulfil our common and, as it seems, the main task - to gain time.

Concluding my speech, I convey my heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia for active efforts to promote cooperation.

And of course, on behalf of the Uzbek delegation, I congratulate the delegation of Kazakhstan on becoming the Chair of the CAREC and wish great success.

Thanks for attention!